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PARKS DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Idema Foundation to Transform  
Wetlands at Millennium Park**

**GRAND RAPIDS** – The Kent County Board of Commissioners recently voted to accept a \$400,000 grant from the Bill and Bea Idema Foundation to create a wetland restoration project at The Meadows located within Millennium Park. The donation will transform a former gravel pit to expand and naturalize a lake, produce wetlands and create trail access and observation points.

Earlier this year a \$3.5 million, 50-acre enhancement called “The Meadows” opened to the public at 1415 Maynard SW. The site features a pavilion, amphitheater, boardwalk, links to the existing trail system and an expansive lawn area for public events. The Idema donation was first discussed after Bea Idema toured The Meadows this summer while it was still under construction. Among their many projects and donations, Bea Idema and the Bill and Bea Idema Foundation’s generous gift in 2012 built the funicular and provided for the development of the Forest Realm at John Ball Zoo.

“The Meadows project was possible due to the generous contribution of Ambassador Peter Secchia and family. As noted at the time of the Secchia donation, Kent County is incredibly fortunate to have the philanthropic community supporting so many projects,” Board Chair Jim Saalfeld said. “Public-private partnerships have helped Kent County provide park users with endless recreational opportunities and experiences. We are very fortunate as a region to have the support of these community pillars to make Kent County a better place to live for all of us. And now, with the new wetlands project, I am so appreciative for the Bill and Bea Idema Foundation for what they have done, and continue to do, for our community.”

The Bill and Bea Idema Foundation gift safeguards protected wetlands and gives our community yet another reason to visit Millennium Park. This gift, along with the many others received over almost two decades, encourages visitors of all ages and abilities to enjoy the boardwalks, scenic wetlands and other outdoor amenities that are possible because of our generous philanthropic community.

Millennium Park is one of the largest urban parks in the United States and one of 42 properties within the County’s Park system. Kent County Parks also manages an extensive network of paved and natural-surfaced trails throughout the County. Learn more at the Parks Department website at [www.accesskent.com/Parks](http://www.accesskent.com/Parks).

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